

## **Our Ocean, One Future Concept Paper**

Secretary Kerry will host the third Our Ocean conference in Washington DC on September 15-16, 2016, focusing again on the key ocean issues of our time – marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean. The overarching objective of the conference will be to inspire and empower a new generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, and civil society to identify solutions and commit to actions to protect and conserve our ocean and its resources.

As with the previous Our Ocean conferences, the 2016 conference will be a visually engaging, inspiring, and interactive event with an unwavering emphasis on commitments for action by participants and other stakeholders around the globe. We anticipate about 450 participants at the 2-day event, with foreign ministers participating at least half a day, and environment/fisheries ministers and other established and up-and-coming ocean leaders in government, science, industry, and civil society participating in the rest. Young and cutting-edge innovators and entrepreneurs will share the stage with well-known global leaders in ocean conservation.

The Our Ocean conferences in Washington (2014) and Chile (2015) created a tremendous wave of commitments on marine conservation, measured in billions of dollars and millions of square kilometers of the ocean protected – about twice the size of India. With their focus on high level engagement, partnership, and action, these conferences set a new standard for success, while complementing other international efforts addressing threats to our ocean such as the ocean sustainable development goal. Implementation of the commitments made at the previous Our Ocean conferences will be the true test of their legacy. Therefore, tracking their progress and celebrating their completion will be a key part of the next conference.

The hallmark of the 2016 Our Ocean conference will again be new commitments for significant and meaningful action to protect the ocean – along with announcements on successful implementation of previous Our Ocean commitments – with a particular focus on the role of technological innovation and entrepreneurship in ocean conservation and sustainable use. Partnerships will be sought with relevant industries, such as fisheries, technologists, plastics producers, waste management companies, major retailers, and major producers, as well as with multilateral development banks and committed civil society stakeholders, including philanthropies, NGOs, academia, and the faith-based community.

Side events, entertainment, social media, and education outreach will be used to involve more stakeholders, especially youth, and to expand the reach of the conference. A parallel side event at Georgetown University will focus on youth and student engagement in ocean policy and advocacy.

As the Our Ocean conferences have demonstrated over the past two years, the global community acknowledges the dire threats facing our ocean and is ready to take action. Together we can keep this incredible momentum going at Our Ocean 2016 in Washington and at Our Ocean 2017 in Europe. Together we can change the world and save our ocean.